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(Continued.)

In a crowd Lahoma was standing when he first caught sight of Lahoma among those descending to the jostling platform from a train. He had not known how she would look, and certainly she was much changed from the girl of fifteen, but he made his way to her side without the slightest hesitation.

"Lahoma!" She turned sharply with a certain ease of movement suggesting fearless freedom. Her eyes looked straight into the young man's with penetrating keenness which instantly softened to pleasure. "Why, how glad I am to see you!" she cried, giving him her hand as they walked toward the rush. "But how did you know me?"

"How did you know me?" he returned, pleased and thrilled by her glowing brown hair, her eloquent eyes, her warm tinted cheeks, her form, as erect as of yore, but not so thin—as pleased and thrilled as if all these belonged to him. "How did you know me?" he repeated.

"Oh," said Lahoma, "when I looked into your face I saw myself as a girl sitting under the cedar trees in the cove with Brick and Bill."

"Just you three?" demanded Wilfred wistfully, also smilingly. "Oh!" exclaimed Lahoma, showing her perfect little teeth as if about to bite, in a way that filled him with fearful joy. "And so they showed you that letter?"

"Just you three?" repeated Wilfred. "Just room enough in the cove for you and Brick—and Bill?"

"Listen to me, Wilfred, and I will do the talking."

"Well?" She lowered her voice to a whisper. "Lean your head closer."

Wilfred put down his head. "Is this close enough?" he whispered, feeling excited. "Men, women and children circled about them; the air vibrated with the shock of trunks and mail bags hurled upon the platform."

"No," said Lahoma, rising on tiptoe. "Wilfred took off his hat and got under hers."

She whispered in his ear: "Red Kimball came on this train. There he is, a porter in our hotel. When he sees us he'll know I've come home to warn Brick. S-h-h! Then he'll try to keep me from doing the deed! Some of his gang are speaking to him. They've been waiting here to meet him. They'll go with him, I expect. We'll all be in the stagecoach together!"

"What do you want me to do to 'em, Lahoma?"

"I want you to pretend that you don't know me—and they mustn't find out your name is Compton, or they'll think Mr. Edgerton got word to you to join me here. Be a stranger till we're safe in the cove."

"All right. Goodbye! But suppose I hadn't come?"

"Oh, I could have done without you," said Lahoma, "or I think I could!"

"Yes, could never have done without me!" Wilfred declared decidedly. "I can right now!" She drew away. "I'll get into the stage. Don't follow too soon."

There were three stagecoaches drawn up at a short distance from the platform, and Lahoma went swiftly to the one bound for her part of the country. She was the first to enter. She was seated quietly in a corner when the two lone seats she faced each other began filling up. The last to come were four men—tall, slender, red faced and red haired; two others of dark and lowering faces, who looked upon the former as their leader, and the last Wilfred Compton, who had unobtrusively joined himself to this remnant of Red Kimball's gang.

The evening shadows were stretching far toward the east from the few trees that marked the dried bed of a stream when the coach stopped among a collection of hovels and tents. As the horses were led away the passengers dismounted, and both Wilfred and Red Kimball hurriedly drew close to Lahoma.

Lahoma, however, appeared unaware of their presence. The sisters, who had taken a great fancy to Lahoma, had been met by the husband of the older, and as they gathered about the big wagon Lahoma was urged to go home with them to supper.

"We're only a little ways out," she was told, "and we'll sure get you back before the stage leaves. The victuals at the station ain't fit to eat."

A very little instance induced Lahoma to comply, and both the young man and the former highwayman saw her go with disappointment. Kimball and his friends went into the "dining hall" to gulp down a hasty meal, and Wilfred entered with them. He remained only a moment, however, just long enough to purchase a number of sandwiches, which he stored away, as if meaning to eat them in the cove.

As soon as he was in the single street with the door closed behind him he darted toward the stage barn and by means of a handsome deposit obtained two horses. Springing upon one, he rode rapidly from the settlement, leading the other, and in a short time came in sight of a cabin, which with its outbuildings, was the only building in all the wide expanse. From its appearance he knew it to be the one described to Lahoma, and he galloped up to the door with the certainty of finding her within.

"Oh, Wilfred," she reproached him. "They'll miss you and know you've come to consult with me about warning Brick."

"Quick, Lahoma!" said Wilfred, as if she had not spoken. "You can ride a horse, I suppose?" He smiled, but his eyes were sparkling with impatience.

In a flash Lahoma's face was glowing with enthusiasm. She looked back into the room and cried, "Goodbye!" Then Wilfred swung her to the back of the led horse. "We'll beat 'em!" cried Lahoma as she sprang upon his horse. "Fast as you please. I've never been left behind yet."

The young man noted with sudden relief that she was dressed for the hardships of the prairie.

"Up there," she said, nodding her head toward the east. "I dressed for people, but out here for wind and sand."

Looking back, she saw the family running out of the cottage, waving handkerchiefs and bonnets as in the mad joy of congratulation.

"They think we're running away together!" shouted Wilfred, with exultation. "How happy they are at the idea!"

"They don't know there's nobody to object if we don't," returned Lahoma gayly as she urged her steed. "Come along, Wilfred," she teased as his horse fell a neck behind hers. "What are you staying back there for? Tired? If we get into the trail before that coach starts we'll have to put on all speed."

"Doing my best," he called, "but I made a bad bargain when I got this beast. This is his best lick, and it doesn't promise to last long. However, it was the only one left at the barn."

Lahoma slightly checked her animal. "That's a good thing, anyway—if there's none left those horrible men can't follow."

Wilfred did not answer. He was sure the stage would be driven in pursuit at breakneck speed, and from the breathing of his horse he feared it could not long endure the contest. To be sure, Red Kimball and his men had no lawful excuse to offer the stage driver for an attempt to stop them, but

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devoured to escape detection from the stage station, but, sheltered by no appreciable inequalities of land and denied the refuge that even a small grove might have furnished, they had, as it were, been held up to view on the prairie, and, though so far away, their horses had been as distinctly outlined as two ants scurrying across a white page.

Wilfred reflected. "If Kimball, when he came out of that restaurant, happened to look in this direction he must have seen us, and the first inquiry at the barn would inform him who're or the horses." But he said nothing until from the rear, came the sound long dreamed, telling, though far away, of bounding horses and groaning wheels.

"Lahoma!" "Yes—I hear them." "My horse is about used up. We'll have to side trail or they'll ride us down."

"I could go on," Lahoma answered as she drew hard on the bit, "but I wouldn't like to leave you here by yourself."

"You couldn't travel that distance by yourself. And good as your horse is it wouldn't last. But thank you for thinking of me," he added, smiling in the darkness, as he dismounted. "Let me lead your horse as well as my own."

"No," said Lahoma, "if leading is to be done, I'll do my part." She leaped lightly to the ground and seized her horse. Side by side they slowly ventured from the trail into the invisible country on the left. They found themselves treading short dead mesquite that did not greatly obstruct their progress.

"Keep going," Wilfred said, when she paused for breath. "It wouldn't do for our horses to whinny, for those fellows would hear them if it was thundering. Give me your hand."

"Here it is," Lahoma felt about in the darkness.

CHAPTER XV. The North. "Y. But I'm glad I've got you, Wilfred!" gasped Lahoma. "Oh, how they are dashing along! Listen how the man is lashing his whip over those four horses. Wish we could see 'em—must be grand tearing along at that rate!"

The stage was rapidly coming up abreast of them, and Wilfred felt her grip tighten. There was a flash of light, a glimpse of the driver's face as of creased leather as he raised his whip above his head, then noise and cloud of dust passed on and the lights became trailing sparks that in a minute or two the wind seemed to blow out.

"My poor Brick!" Lahoma wailed. "Do you think he'll take good enough care of himself from what I wrote in my letters? But no, he doesn't think Red Kimball is coming yet, for I didn't know it till after I'd written. He's with Bill now, waiting for another letter. Or for a telegram."

"No, no, Lahoma," Wilfred tried to soothe her. "He has been hiding for days. Why should he come out just at the wrong time? You wrote that you'd not send any more messages. Brick will be on the lookout for Kimball. He is sure to be watching out for him."

"I know Brick," Lahoma protested, seemingly all at once overcome by the fatigues of her journey and the hopelessness of the situation. "I was afraid he wouldn't agree to hide at all, and just as soon as you came away and there wasn't any more prospects of letters, he'd get lonesome and tire of staying away from home. He's in that cove this minute, and he'll be there when Red Kimball takes the sheriff after him." Her voice quivered with distress.

"Don't be afraid, Lahoma," urged Wilfred, slipping his arm protectingly about her. "Don't grieve. I'm sure Brick is in a safe place."

"Well, I'm not in danger," said Lahoma, withdrawing from his involuntary embrace. "Don't take me for Brick. Maybe you're right, but no, I'm sure he wouldn't be willing to stay out in the mountains week after week—and during these cold nights, for it is cold right now. We must hurry on, Wilfred."

"There's one comfort," said Wilfred as they retraced their way toward the trail. "Mr. Gledware won't appear as a witness against Brick. We'll get him cleared away enough."

"But Mr. Gledware will appear against him, and he'll swear anything that Red Kimball wants."

"I thought he agreed to do that only on condition that a certain pin—" "Yes, but Red Kimball brought him that pin just before I left!"

"Brought him the pin that the Indian had?"

"Yes, the pearl and onyx pin. And Mr. Gledware seemed to consider it so important that I know Red Feather would never have given it up while he had life."

"Then—" Lahoma shuddered. "Yes. You see now what a fiend Red Kimball is. And you know now what a bold he has over Mr. Gledware—can make him testify in such a way as to ruin my poor Brick. If Brick knew this he'd understand how important it is to see for his life and never, never let himself be taken. But he thinks nobody could get the better of Red Feather. You see, if he just dreamed what has happened he'd know Mr. Gledware can convict him."

"We must reach Brick Wilfred before Red Kimball gets his warrant!" exclaimed Wilfred desperately. "Yes, we must—we must!" Lahoma was growing slightly hysterical. "I won't mind any hardship, any danger. But what are we to do? You won't let me ride on alone, and you wouldn't be willing to leave me here and take the good horse yourself."

"You're quite right about that," returned the young man promptly. "We can only mount again and go as fast as my miserable beast can travel, hoping for some chance to come our way. We have the advantage of not being in the stage, where Kimball could keep an eye on us."

(To be Continued.)

## TWO ALARM FIRE IN GRAIN WAREHOUSE.

A two alarm fire, caused by fire on the top floor of the building at 473 Water street, occupied by Susman Flour Co., as a flour and feed warehouse, caused several hundred dollars' worth of damage to the building and a quantity of hay stored there. Spontaneous combustion is believed to be the origin. Another fire in the same district in the Smith-Comstock building, called the department to 603 Water street yesterday afternoon. The damage was nominal.

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